.P
5012
1858
C

Queen's University
Library

KINGSTON, ONTARIO

1858C

CANADA:

ITS POLITICAL PAST, PRESENT,

AND

PROBABLE FUTURE.

GENTLEMEN,—In undertaking the performance of a duty necessarily imposed upon each active and willing member of this Club, I am alive to the very great importance of framing the instrument through which this duty is fulfilled, by the aid of accurate research and mature deliberation. There is, perhaps, no subject better calculated to induce the exercise of those faculties than the one I have selected for this paper, but I fear that my self-assigned task has been poorly executed. Nevertheless, I can only claim from the Club that indulgence which has been so frequently granted to me on former occasions, when I have had the honor of appearing before it. Deeming further preface as unnecessary, we shall proceed to the consideration of the following subject:—CANADA, ITS POLITICAL PAST, PRESENT AND PROBABLE FUTURE.

We purpose subdividing the subject into three parts—

1st. Canada from its formation as a Colony by the French to 1837 and 1838.

2nd. Canada in 1858.

3rd. Canada in the future.

The name of Canada has long been a matter of dispute among etymologists. It has been supposed to have arisen from an exclamation of the early Portuguese navigators, who, observing the desolation of the country, exclaimed *Aca-Nada.* Others suppose it to have taken its name from the Spanish, Canada, a canal, from the shape of the country, forming the banks of the river St. Lawrence, but the more received explanation is the Indian derivation, Canata, a collection of huts.

The first actual fixture on the soil was made by France, in the reign of Francis 1st, in 1535, when Jacques Cartier sailed up the St. Lawrence and anchored off Quebec, then Stadacona, on the 10th August, in that year. He subsequently reached Hochelaga which he called Mount-Royal, now Montreal. Quebec was permanently founded in 1608. In 1663 the French king, by advice of Colbert, his minister, erected the Canadas into a Royal Government with Mr. DeMésy

39776

as Governor General, encouraged his disbanded soldiers to settle, and gave estates to their Officers, with land under the Feudal Tenure, a form of property which has subsisted until the late abolition of the Seignorial Tenure, in 1854. In 1759 Canada was invaded in three quarters by the British. 8,000 men, under the command of General Wolfe, attacked Quebec, and the renowned victory of the Plains of Abraham placed the stronghold of the country in the hands of the invaders. The peace of 1763, between France and England, extinguished all the pretensions of France to Canada and Nova Scotia.

The British conquest was undeniably of infinite importance to the country. Commerce, agriculture, justice and security, were its immediate results. France has always proved herself unfit to govern a colony with moderation, so that the change of 1763 may be regarded at the present day as the foundation of the prosperity which we now enjoy.

In 1775, the American war broke out, in which the Canadas were suddenly involved by the advance of Arnold on Quebec, and Montgomery on Montreal. Subsequently the American Generals having joined their armies, besieged Quebec, where Montgomery fell, and the American troops withdrew in the month of May of that year. The original constitution of Canada was that of France—despotic. The Governor and his Council were the supreme disposers of every thing. In 1774, soon after the British conquest, a constitution was given fixing the boundaries of the country, and appointing a Governor, with a Council of not less than 17, with power to frame laws, but not to levy taxes. The English criminal law was introduced, providing, however, that in all controverted matters recourse should be had to the old French law, and securing all its privileges to the Roman Catholic religion in the Province.

In 1791, Lord Grenville's act divided the Canadas into the Upper and Lower Provinces. Lower Canada was subjected to a Governor and Executive Council of 11 members appointed by the Crown, similar to the British Privy Council: a Legislative Council appointed by mandamus from the Crown, forming the second estate, and a Representative Assembly, or third estate, consisting of members from the cities of Quebec and Montreal, and the counties. The latter were elected for 4 years by electors possessing property to the value of £5, or paying rent to the amount of £10 per annum. The Governor in the name of the Sovereign had the right of assembling, proroguing and dissolving the two Houses, which must be called together at least once a year. The Assembly was empowered to make laws for the order and peace of the Province, subject to the approval of the Legislative Council. The Governor give the Royal Sanction to the Bills of both Houses, or withheld any particular one for the signification of the Sovereign's pleasure thereon. The form of government above described was, with few modifications, still in existence in 1834.

In Upper Canada, the Government since 1791 had also been administered by a Lieut.-Governor, Executive and Legislative Councils, and a House of Representatives; the Executive consisting of six members chosen by the Crown. The above rapid sketch will serve to show the political position of the Canadas in 1834. For many years the French Canadian population of the Lower Province had, through their representatives in the House of Assembly, combatted the oppressive policy of the Colonial Office in England, and the unjustifiable harshness of an oligarchy composed of English place-holders and time-servers in the colony, whose main desire seemed to be the extinction of the French element in the population of the country. The majority of the latter class contended for equal rights and liberty, a fair share of the emoluments of office, and an opportunity to serve their country. The minority, consisting of the former class, contended for despotism, and the wrong of which they were in the profitable enjoyment. The English party at that time consisted almost exclusively of Tories of the most severe stamp, merchants, shipowners, and functionaries; the two first fleecing the English people in the shape of the timber monopoly, and the last the people of Canada in the form of places and sinecures. The French Canadians were represented at that time to be poor, ignorant and simple. If compared with the masses in the United States at that time, we might deny them the compliment of being rich, wise and highly educated; but if we compare them with the masses of Britain at the same time, we must accord to the Canadians at least equality. The business, however, of a politician in such a case is not so much with the people as with those who have the power to move and lead the people.

The leaders of the French Canadians in 1834, it will now be readily admitted by all, have exhibited a distinguished intelligence, spirit and forecast, which scarcely leave them behind the old American colonists themselves. In sound argument and good English, these alleged Frenchmen succeeded in beating the rhetorical chief of the Colonial Office, his subalterns, his commissioners and his governors. It was maintained by the Tory party at that time, that the Canadians had no grievances worth naming, but were happy, contented and lightly taxed. We say that the vote of the Imperial Parliament sanctioning the seizure of the money in the Canadian Exchequer was sufficient to rouse the indignation of the victims. Where is the difference in principle between this and the immediate cause of the American revolution? In the one case, the mother country is at the trouble and expense of collecting; in the other, she puts the expense of collecting on the colonists, and unceremoniously helps herself from the nett proceeds in the strong box. In both cases the money was taken without the consent of the people, but in the case of Canada, it was taken in the manner the most convenient, expeditious and economical to the appropriators. The other principal grievance was

the possession of a Legislative Council, the patron of every job, and the determined opponent of all good and popular measures. This Council even, during the presence of the King's Commissioners, rejected, (with the exception of one railway bill) every bill passed by the House of Assembly for the internal improvement of the country. Among them the annual school bill, the loss of which was followed by the closing of 1665 schools, and the deprivation of 400,000 children of the means of instruction. The people felt that as long as the existence of such a council should continue, the constitution was a mockery and a delusion, and in 1834 they demanded, by means of the celebrated 92 resolutions, among other prominent reforms, for the introduction of the elective principle into the Legislative Council. The demands therein made were urged in firm but moderate terms. Propositions so monstrous to the aristocratic minds of the family compact of the day, received, of course, the most determined opposition.

The next year, in an address to the king, we find the following strong but just remonstrance:—"When we solemnly repeat, "that the principal object of the political reforms, which this "house and the people of this Province have for a great num- "ber of years used every effort to obtain, and which have fre- "quently been detailed to Your Majesty is to extend the elec- "tive principle, to the Legislative Council a Branch of the "Provincial Legislature which, by its opposition to the people, "and by reason of its imperfect and vicious constitution, has "proved insufficient to perform the functions for which it was "originally created; to render the Executive Council directly "responsible to the representatives, of the people of Canada, "conformably to the principles and practice of the British Con- "stitution as established in the United Kingdom, to place under "the wholesome and constitutional control of this House, the "whole public revenue raised in this Province, from whatever "source derived, to obtain the repeal of certain acts, passed by "the Parliament of the United Kingdom, in which the people "of this Province are not represented with regard to the inter- "nal affairs of this Province, making its territory and best re- "sources the subject of unfair speculation and monopoly, and "which we hold to be a violation of the rights of the Legisla- "ture and of the people of this Province."

Then again, on the subject of the Canadian Land Company and other monopolies of a similar stamp, the Assembly addressed Lord Gosford in the following strain:—"Every day convinces us "the more that the principal tendency of this Company, is to "maintain that division of people against people amongst the "different classes of Her Majesty's subjects, which has, in "common with all the evils resulting therefrom, been fostered "in times past with too much success by corrupt administrations.

These representations, though made in good faith by the Canadians, seemed to be totally disregarded at the time by the presiding genii of Downing Street. The name of a French

Canadian attached to a document was sufficient to assign it to the dark recesses of a minister's vaults, or at least to excite the strongest prejudice and animosity on the part of the British reader, who imagined he perceived in each Jean Baptiste a Guy Fawkes, whose main intention was the blowing up of the king of England, his Lords, Commons and dominions. Unhappily these prejudices and animosities were strong, and to the existence of this state of feeling we are compelled to attribute the failure on the part of British Legislators of that day, to provide means for the alleviation of existing evils. A conciliatory policy could then have ensured, as it does now, peace and resignation; a tyrannical policy could only obtain disagreeable results. The blood which flowed in the veins of those men precluded the possibility of tame acquiescence, and animated them to demand their rights. When Britain was boasting of her freedom, her liberality, her enlightenment, her prosperity, was it prudent, was it just to inflict oppression and injustice on a conquered people? We say not only that it was unjust, but we assert that it was impolitic. There were hosts of loyal French Canadians in 1837; there are many now, but flesh and blood could not bear the ignominious treatment they had received previous to that time. The consequence was a revolt, unfortunate in its cause, temporarily unsuccessful in its prosecution, frightful in its immediate, but magnificent in its ultimate results. Though lives were sacrificed, though villages were burnt, though towns were desolated, one grand result was obtained. Out of evil came good; the eyes of the people of England were opened to the fact that the colonists of French origin in Canada, though they had been despised, contemned and insulted, had sufficient spirit to declare that they could not brook the existence of a family compact in their midst, which looked upon and treated them as an inferior race. The ultimate results of this outbreak we feel to-day. All that was demanded by these alleged rebel Frenchmen in 1834 has been granted, and many of the originators of this movement, in 1857, have been elevated to positions of the highest responsibility in 1857. An admission has thus been made that these men acted patriotically, not criminally, and to *their* spirit and forecast are we indebted for our present advantageous political position. Let us examine more minutely the relative strength of the arguments adduced at that time by the contending parties.

It was urged by the British party that an elective Legislative Council would weaken and ultimately destroy the connexion between the colony and the mother country. In reply it was maintained that the continuation of the existing system would not only ultimately but speedily destroy that connexion, and for these reasons:—The Council was a great cause of discontent. The chief complaint of the Canadians against the Imperial Government was, not that it was in itself directly and immediately oppressive, but that it maintained and support-

ed the Legislative Council. And well might this institution be offensive to the colony. There may be differences on the question, how much of the government of the colony should belong to the colony itself, and how much to the mother country. The colony exercises its power through a representative body. The mother country exercises its power through the Governor and by means of Parliament, and the Colonial Office can hold him responsible for whatever he does in the exercise of them. But here was a third power coequal with these two, and representing neither the mother country nor the colony, but a band of jobbing officials solely, not only frustrating the wishes of the colony but superseding the authority of the mother country, since the Bills which embody the demands of the people being rejected by the Upper House never come regularly before the Governor or the Colonial Minister at all. This was one of the main causes of discontent in 1837 and 38, and we can make full allowance for the unfortunate proceedings which characterized that period. The leaders of that factious party still live in our midst; all of them having paid the penalty of expatriation, either voluntary or forced; many of them have retired from active political life, but in their retirement they have earned the respect of every Canadian who looks with an eye of judgment and impartiality upon the proceedings of those days, and who can fully appreciate the outrageous tyranny of which the party they led were the victims, when trodden under the heel of an unscrupulous oligarchy in the colony, and a relentless Colonial Office in Downing Street. The rebellion was crushed, peace was restored, but the spirit of reform had not vanished with the smoke of St. Denis and St. Charles. The leaders of the revolt were dealt with by the law. Some were executed, others banished, many fled from the fangs of the revengeful oligarchy, and made the neighbouring republic their home. Years passed away, but gradually we could perceive the force of public opinion once more assuming its sway.

In 1838, Lord Durham was sent out as Governor General, when he produced his famous Report on the state of the Provinces. Having resigned, owing to some animadversions made on his conduct in the House of Commons, Mr. Poulett Thompson was sent out to succeed him, and in 1839 a Bill passed the Imperial Parliament reuniting the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, with one Legislative Council and House of Assembly, according to the recommendation of Lord Durham. Much opposition to this measure was manifested by a large number of Lower Canadians, but the Union was accepted at the dictation of the dominant party of the day.

Of the policy of that Union it is difficult at this day either to approve or disapprove. Many consider that the course then adopted was prudent. Others, who judge from the difficulties which have since continued to exist between the two sections of the Province, disapprove energetically of that

measure. We are forced to conclude that it has not produced the beneficial results anticipated by its promoters.

Subsequent to the Union, the representatives of both sections met for legislative purposes in the same Houses of Parliament. Under the rule of Sir F. Bond Head, Upper Canada had also been sadly misgoverned, and it required no common prudence to reconciliate the incongruous elements, of which the United House of Assembly was composed. The constitution of the Legislative Council remained unchanged, but a disposition seemed to be manifested, to grant that portion of the 92 resolutions, which claimed the privilege of rendering the Executive Council directly responsible to the elected representatives of the people—conformably to the principles and practice of the British Constitution, as established in the United Kingdom. This much desiderated concession, was at last granted, and the first fruits of the determined stand made by the liberals of Canada in 1834 were permanently obtained. From that time to the present day, no great event has occurred which deserves special mention in this paper.

Having thus passed rapidly in review the political events which have transpired in Canada, previous to and immediately after 37 and 38, having glanced *en passant* at the effects produced by the proceedings of those days, both on the Imperial Government and the colonists, let us arrive at the important era in Canadian politics, which will in future be known as 1858, and calmly and dispassionately let us consider our actual position at the present day. With a large and rapidly increasing population, with important means of education at our command, with our extensive commerce, means of communication, manufactures, and agricultural advantages, we have truly reason to be proud of our enviable position. It is our duty, as it is the primary duty of every people, to see that forms of government are in accordance with the wishes of the majority, the inherent rights of the minority being nevertheless religiously respected. Individuals are found in every nation, who maintain extreme opinions in political subjects, and who conscientiously aim at the extension of their peculiar views. But time and circumstance have in these days laid a softening hand on the most ultra-politicians. Those violent eruptions, to which detailed allusion has been made in the commencement of this paper, heaving and rending the face of society, seem unlike our present temper. The oligarchical tyranny of which the Canadians, so bitterly and justly complained in 1837 and 1838, has almost ceased to exist, and in its room, thanks to the progress of liberal ideas in Britain, a policy more extended and conciliatory in its nature, better adapted to the aims and claims of a free and enlightened people, has been substituted. A law has at last received the Royal Assent, introducing the elective principle into the Legislative Council, and the people of Canada enjoy the blessings of Responsible Government, in other words self Government, to a very satisfactory extent. This system so long contended for, gained by so much sacrifice and exertion, deserves

full and ample consideration at our hands, and we purpose treating of its proper application to the Government of this country. Formerly in England, if a Councillor gave wrong and disastrous counsel to the King, he acted on his individual responsibility, and was liable to be impeached by Parliament. The idea of impeaching individual ministers, has since been abandoned, and now the only security which a Cabinet possesses, is its ability to inspire a feeling of satisfaction in a majority of that House which directly represents the people. If this feeling end, the Cabinet ends also, and a vote of want of confidence at once disposes of the men and their measures. Precisely the same system, is applied in Canada at the present day. A constitutional government is necessarily an artificial one. It is made up of checks and counter checks, and the best security we have in its success, is the existence of constitutional freedom What is meant by constitutional freedom? Is it that the consitution makes the people free? No, it is the freedom of the people that makes the constitution possible. Canada is free, not because one party is in, and the other out of power, but because the minds of the people are imbued with the love of freedom and order. As long as we retain personal freedom, as long as we are judged openly by fixed laws, as long as we have the power of writing and speaking what is not libellous, and as long as we are free from ecclesiastical tyranny, we shall occupy a position second to that of no country in the world.

In the application of the system of Responsible Government we have two great evils to provide against, and it is the duty of the people to strain every nerve with the view of electing Legislators pledged to the total abolition and extinction of bribery and patronage. Bribery is a blot on the face of late events in this country, which years of honesty in public life can only efface. When we separate the terms bribery and patronage, we wish it however to be understood, that we consider patronage merely as a different mode of bribery. We have witnessed the disgusting sight, during late years, not only of electors selling their honor and independence for hard cash, but the elected, the representatives of a civilized people, to their everlasting disgrace be it recorded, have bartered their position, the interests of their constituents, the well being of their country for paltry pelf, wherewith to gratify their sordid avarice. Men of good name and family have amassed thousands of pounds by a shameful traffic with the Ministry of the day; their votes in exchange for money and patronage, fat jobs for their friends, rich pickings and perquisites for themselves. In many constituencies *now*, a candidate's strongest recommendation is not that he is a liberal or a conservative, that he is in favor of or against Representation by Population, or Separate Schools, Protection or Free Trade, the Grand Trunk Railway Grant, or a Confederation of the Provinces, but simply that he can afford to produce £2000 to £3000 to buy his way into the

House of Assembly, whence he can with all the cool impudence imaginable, address his constituents, informing them that as he has purchased their votes they can have no claim whatever on him, whether his parliamentary course suit their political views or not. In other constituencies the tone of morality which pervades the masses, precludes the possibility of success in a purchasing politician, and a candidate must rely on his character, his previous career and his power of impressing the electors, with the conviction that he is capable of discerning the diseases under which the country labors, and of applying the requisite remedies. We have a strong example of the existence of this feeling in a neighbouring Electoral Division where, during a late election, although one candidate was supported by all the power that an Attorney General and an Ex-Provincial Secretary could bring to bear in their own counties, and although he disbursed thousands of pounds in the open purchase of votes, the opposing candidate was returned by a strong majority of unpurchaseable electors. Happily a sense of shame and indignation at the continuance of this odious system of bribery and corruption is becoming general. There are thousands now ready to protest against it, to hunt it out, to hand it over to the degradation it deserves. Let us hope that the efforts of those men will be successful, and that in the future the great privileges of Responsible Government may not be degraded by the uses to which they are at present applied. The political position of Canada at the present moment, is indeed, a serious problem for statesmen. Of late years, what with parliamentary orations and party manœuvres, we have nearly brought legislation to a stand still. Parties in this country are strangely balanced, divided and defined. We have something different to the Whig and Tory of England. We have the ultra Tory in both sections of the Province, it is true, but we have also the *Moderate* Conservative, the *Moderate* Reformer, the so called *Clear Grit*, the ultra Reformer of Upper, and the so called *Rouge*, the ultra Reformer of Lower Canada. Since the commencement of coalitions in this country it is astonishing with what alacrity the title of moderate is affixed to the name of the politician who enters a coalition. Though, perhaps, the most extreme of his party before, by passing through the crucible of the Council Chamber, he suddenly becomes the very embodiment of innocent moderation. In addition to the above sects we have one which occupies continually a position of undignified neutrality: a kind of loose fish who swims in the ocean of politics, devouring or seeking to devour the crumbs which fall from the ministerial ship, adhering as a sucker as long as the crumbs are administered, and when the ship sinks, of course, starting in search of another.

This specimen of icthyology is to be seen in great variety at the street corners of our large cities, continually vociferating in the most eloquent tones of the purity, honesty, industry, ac-

tivity, and ability of the *powers that be*. If a cloud overshadow the shining sun of their adoration, in an instant you perceive a gloomy change over the spirit of their dream. That sun which they were wont to worship sets perchance in clouds, and after a good night's rest, again they are on their knees imploring the rising sun to shed its benign influence over their path. A Commissionership, a Judgeship, a Shrievalty, a Collectorship, anything to enable these devoted creatures to serve their country. Seriously, such time-servers and toad-eaters should be hurled from society with derision and contempt. An honest and straightforward expression of opinion, with practical application of that opinion, should alone recommend a man to a responsible position in the country.

From the time of the conquest of this country by the British to the present day, a gradual and progressive advance has been made towards democratic institutions. The inhabitants of this Province, have always been and continue to be loyal to the ruler of the day in Great Britain. They respect the Representative of the Sovereign in this Colony but not with that servile adoration expected of them by some of the ultra loyalists of the old school. They possess a representative government, which has been obtained by 30 years of struggles and danger, and they refuse to be deprived of those safeguards to their liberties, as a people which are so dear to every Canadian, whether of French or British origin. They demand that the British Constitution should be applied as in England, viz :— that the people should rule through the men of their choice, and above all, that the Ministers in power should be responsible to the people for their official acts. A late attempt on the part of the Governor of this Colony to interfere with the true application of this system has been resisted vigorously and patriotically, and it is satisfactory and encouraging to find that the British Press, that of our sister Colonies, and the United States of every colour in politics, has denounced in the most unmistakeable manner the attempt of the Governor General, to sap the foundations of our constitutional liberty. Such conduct on the part of a Governor General must meet with that condemnation in England from the highest authorities, which their knowledge of Canada and the character of its people will induce them to exercise. Should the authorities hesitate, the people of England will raise a voice of thunder in our behalf. We have gained constitutional liberty by the assistance of that strong voice on former occasions, and the same invincible power is again at our disposal, when urgently required. The people of this continent are eminently fitted for democratic institutions. The magnificent Union on our borders was constituted and organized in an immense continent, was cut out of forests, which had never been attacked by the axe of civilization, watered by rivers and streams, which hitherto had only served to carry broken trunks of trees and Indian canoes. In this vast expanse of forest, every thing was to be done to make it the

abode of a civilized nation. Still the American Republic was born. She took up her position among the powerful nations of the world, in a space of time incredibly short. She selected as the motto of her onward progress, colonization and civilization, and by the invincible energy of the Anglo-Saxon race transplanted from the soil of Britain, she has accomplished the greatest wonders which it has ever been the lot of any people to accomplish. She invited from all parts of the world men whose talent remained unappreciated in their native land. The invitation was cordially responded to by thousands from all the old nations of Europe, and out of this chaos of intellect, ambition, light and shade, out of this Babel of peoples speaking all the known languages, her Republican institutions have established a nation on the continent of America of which no precedent can be formed in the annals of the world.

Canada, on the other hand, though she has made considerable strides in the path of progress, has not advanced in the same ratio as the United States, and we are firm in the belief that the establishment of similar institutions will alone enable us to hold our own in the immediate vicinity of such a colossal and ambitious power. If, then, we can prognosticate with some certainty that in the future we shall possess those peculiar institutions, it behoves us at this day to prepare ourselves for such an important change. Several questions of vital interest are now at issue between the two sections of the Province. Upper Canada Reformers clamor for a system of representation based on the population of the whole country. Lower Canada Reformers concede the principle as correct in itself, and are prepared to vote for its adoption, on condition that the peculiar institutions of Lower Canada are guaranteed and protected by the constitution against the possibility of destruction by an overwhelming Upper Canada majority. Lower Canada considers herself entitled to representation in the Legislature according to her active population, her manufactories, her navigable river, and her centres of commerce. Upper Canada claims representation owing to her immense agricultural resources, and busy population, but rests her claim more particularly on the numbers of her inhabitants.

By reference to the statistical returns of the emigration department it will be found that but one 1000 out of 15,000 emigrants remain in Lower Canada. The fertile lands of Canada West are the resort of all those who are desirous of possessing and cultivating land. The narrow belt of land under or fit for the plough on each bank of the St. Lawrence below the rapids does not offer to the farmer from Britain sufficient prospective advantages, and thus he travels on to the attractive wheat lands of the west. The majority of the population of Upper over Lower Canada is therefore annually increasing, and must eventually attain enormous proportions. It must then be admitted, that in view of such a large increase of population, the Upper Province must at a future day have an increased repre-

sentation. To doubt the justice of legislating with that end in view would be the height of ignorance, but the problem to be solved is, how can that end be best attained without injustice to the rights and privileges of the eastern section. In all countries which are blessed with a constitutional government, it is not disputed that the people is the source of all legitimate power. The influence of public opinion of that great choral voice, which speaks louder than senates, ministers and kings is acknowledged to possess a just and irresistible authority. The direct interference of a very large proportion of the citizens in the administration of the localities to which they themselves belong, is already adopted as an established principle of all the most enlightened nations.

In the small but absolute monarchies of the North of Europe the most entire local independence prevails, and in Prussia the rigorous and exclusive authority of the crown is tempered by Municipal Institutions which are not unworthy of one of the best educated nations in this world. In New England, townships were completely and definitively constituted as early as 1650. The independence of the township was the nucleus round which the local interests, passions, rights and duties collected and clung. It gave scope to the activity of a real political life, most thoroughly democratic and republican. The colonies still recognized the supremacy of the mother country, monarchy was still the law of the States, but the republic was already established in every township. The towns named their own magistrates of every kind, rated themselves and levied their own taxes. That system of township independence is the life and mainspring of American liberty at the present day. It cannot be denied that a system of local independence operates as a powerful instrument of social education, and as a principle of cohesion in the community. We have in this the only solution of our present difficulty on the subject of Representation based upon Population. By the adoption of the principle contended for we merely concede that of which the liberal party has always approved. By securing guaranties for this section of the Province by a well matured plan of local self-government, perfected on the plan of the U. States, or some of the Northern European powers, we conciliate each others prejudices and arrive at a conclusion beneficial to all, which will serve to cement that good understanding which should exist between the people of both sections of the Province, whether Protestant or Catholic, of English or French origin.

Another subject of some interest in the politics of Canada at the present day is whether schools supported by the Government should be mixed or separate, whether Catholic and Protestant children should meet for the purposes of education under the same roof, or whether separate schools should be provided for each sect and supported by the taxes levied on the general community. In the consideration of this important

question, during the last few years, much excitement has been created in the country. Lower Canada possesses an imperfect system of Separate Schools supported by the State. Upper Canada possesses an indefinite and uncertain system of State Schools. The Roman Catholic party in Lower Canada have insisted on a concession of the same privileges to a Catholic minority in Upper Canada, enjoyed by a Protestant minority in Lower Canada. This appears to be simple justice, but a majority of the inhabitants of Upper Canada have frequently manifested a strong indisposition to foster Roman Catholicism in their part of the Province. Antagonism, therefore, exists, and it is manifestly the duty of our statesmen from both sections to adopt a policy which will conciliate these unfortunate prejudices of religion and locality. These differences of opinion on subjects touching religious, as opposed to secular education, exist in every country in the world, and it would be surprising in a mixed population like ours if we escaped the same dissensions. We hold an opinion that religious education is not the paternal duty of the State. That duty is to provide for the people the means of a sound and liberal practical education, leaving the dogmatical branches to be inculcated in the Churches and in Sunday Schools, by the Ministers of each different sect to the children of that sect.

A distinguished writer says :—" The primary end of government is purely temporal, the protection of the property, and persons of men, and government, like every other contrivance of human wisdom, is likely to answer its main end best, when constructed with a single view to that end."

We consider the religious education of the people as no part whatever of the duty of government. The construction of a national system of secular education would be the best adapted to the mixed population of this country, and would serve to abolish most speedily those religious animosities which must naturally subsist where the state supports the propagation of two distinct creeds in our Common Schools. If we maintained the correctness of the principle which provides for religious instruction in the Roman Catholic and Protestant creeds in our national schools, as well might our fellow citizens Arminists, Calvinists, Episcopalians, Jews, Presbyterians, Pedobaptists, Anabaptists, and Unitarians, demand the same privileges. It is, therefore, clear that the state, instead of sanctioning the introduction of dogmatical inculcation, should insist on the adoption of a purely secular system of education. The Government ought, indeed, to desire the propagation of Christianity, but the extent to which they must do so must be limited by the degree in which the people are found willing to accept it. We have thus dealt briefly with the prominent questions of difficulty which are agitating the public mind—the Upper as opposed to the Lower Province. Other questions of national importance of vital interest to both, present themselves, but in

the limits of this paper, which is already sufficiently lengthy, it is found impossible to discuss them.

A few words, however, regarding the important proposition recently entertained of a Confederation of the British North American Provinces, and the construction of a national railroad between Halifax and Quebec. Many are sanguine in the expectation, that no difficulty will arise in the preparation and completion of this measure. We hold that some plan must be adopted to give additional strength to each of the Provinces of Canada, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Cape Breton. It cannot be denied that this result would be best attained by the consolidation of all these separate powers into one. The principal difficulty to be met is in obtaining the sanction of the people of each Province to any particular form of government which may be suggested or decided upon by the Imperial Parliament, with the advice of delegates from the several Provinces. The opinions of these several delegates, or of a majority of them, may certainly be in favor of confederation under the direction and rule of the Colonial Office, but we must candidly believe that were such a plan submitted, as in such case it necessarily must be, to the vote of the people, the sanction would not be unanimously accorded. In our apprehension the only form of government which could possibly obtain in the proposed confederation is the Republican, on the system of the United States. The division of the confederation into States, with Local Legislatures, each possessing the sovereign power of legislating for the wants of that particular state, having a Senate and Congress at the Capital to perform the duties of a central legislature, seems to us the most feasible plan. The head of the confederation should also be chosen from among the colonists themselves.

At present in these colonies, no broad self-acting principles are laid down for establishing colonial liberty, in harmony with the central power. The United States have solved this problem. Her emigrants subdue the wilderness, establish their own municipal institutions, coalesce into a territory, receive judges from the central executive, and finally, when their numbers reach the requisite point, can demand to be accepted into the Union as a constituent state, on submitting to a few broad and necessary principles, notorious and universal. In that system it is by fairness, by publicity, by broad and unchanging principle that the United States has produced such great results, and Canada has begun to thrive just in proportion as she has become emancipated from the control of a British Colonial Office. The American system promotes the interests of freehold cultivators, while the Colonial Office struggles to keep up rich landlords and indigent peasants and shepherds toiling for wages. Our rulers do not seem to wish the independence of the lower classes in the Colonies.

For these reasons we would deem it imprudent to hasten a confederation of the Provinces under the direction and rule of

Downing Street influence. When the time does come for a Union of the Provinces, let us hope that it will be accomplished on the Republican principle, with the sanction of that great power which rules us now, and which cannot forbear from expressing its daily admiration of the success of its offshoot, the United States.

In our apprehension the political crisis through which Canada has lately passed, may well serve as a warning voice to our legislators. A plan that should be vigorously and generally pursued is to hold out to our countrymen in Great Britain that we are not a handful of miserable individuals, unworthy of attention or consideration, but rather an important people, determined to progress in the path of reform, to grapple with difficulties of moment, and above all, to insist upon the maintenance of those rights which belong to us as free and enlightened people.

And why should the scoffing name of *Rebel* be fastened on the name of him who holds these views? Should he be branded as unfit to hold a position in the community because he does not tamely submit to the whims and caprices of each official of the Colonial Office who may be sent here to hold the reins of government for a time. The liberality of the British people, their desire to obtain for the colonists of the empire equal liberty of speech and action, should in the future prevent the recurrence of the deplorable events of the past. Inevitably and rapidly we are advancing towards a condition of entire and unshackled national freedom. And looming in the future, we can foresee a mighty nation stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, a people of which England and France will be proud, their joint offspring; a nation celebrated for its power, its wealth, and the enlightenment of its inhabitants. Bands of iron traversing the magnificent tract of country lying between the two oceans, will promote successful commerce, will consolidate and ameliorate our agricultural and mining interests, and will serve as a bond of union between the denizens of the far west and nearer east. Perchance the valuable carrying trade of the East Indies may court our channels of communication. Clearly the future destiny of Canada is a glorious subject of contemplation. It is but surmise and speculation, but from the actual progress of the past we can confidently judge of probable progress in the future.

Young men of to-day, of the middle classes of society, are frequently discouraged by their superiors from studying, noticing, or participating in political proceedings. They are generally charged with presumption if courageous enough to express political opinions. They are blandly informed that politics will not put money in their purses. We admit cordially the correctness of this assertion, as applicable to honest young politicians, and see reason to congratulate the speaker of such words upon the compliment paid to the aspirants of the present day. Such a conviction would augur well for the future of the country. Hitherto the practice of politics has proved

the most lucrative of occupations. It is not difficult to decide which is the greater villain. He who charged by his fellow-citizens with the powers of Government, deliberately appropriates to his own use the taxes levied on the general community, or the burglar who enters his fellowman's house, and extracts his silver. Manifestly the former is the more dishonest man, because he has basely violated a sacred trust reposed in him, while the latter, an outcast of society, has perhaps been compelled to adopt some desperate method to save himself from starvation. It is the duty of our young men to study the political position of the country, to apply that study practically with the view of benefitting their country and their fellow-men, with the view of improving the standard of our public men. If it is difficult to-day to find competent public servants, if we have to admit with shame that many of our representatives are below the standard of mediocrity, if we witness the most glaring instances of abuse of power and corruption, if the halls of our Legislature are filled with Lawyers, Doctors and Notaries, it is due to the lamentable fact that the young commercial men of the generation preceding ours did not devote themselves in leisure hours to the study and practice of politics. Our mercantile interests are not adequately represented, because merchants are too fond of their Ledgers, and Dollars and Cents. They use the country and its manifold advantages to put money in their chests, and are not sufficiently patriotic to make some sacrifices for its benefit and the happiness of their less fortunate fellow-citizens of the lower classes. Not only do they refuse to give their own services, but they seek assiduously to prevent others from doing so who are more patriotically inclined. We see, however, daily improvement in this regard, and sincerely trust that in the future young men, possessing moderate abilities, will not be frowned down by those who should show them a good example. It will be to us a source of much gratification if the contents of this paper shall awake in the minds of our juniors in this Club some interest in the subject of Canadian politics.

To conclude, Canada in the past has committed some errors, and has nobly repaired them, she has been at times the victim of injustice and oppression, but the feeling of antagonism, which incited those results, has, we trust, forever past away. In the present she has her questions of local discussion, but these wounds on the body politic by the exertions of an enlightened and judicious people will be speedily closed and healed, and in the future, though they may not pass tracklessly, though they may leave some faint shadows behind, experience and wisdom will gradually operate towards their entire obliteration. Devotedly attached to this, the land of our birth and her people, we look with proud hope to her political future, reposing confidence in that great Power which from on high governs all the nations of the world according to their several deserts. May he find ours worthy of a brilliant future in the scale of nations.